
MARK SAYERS



PLATFORMS
TO
PILLARS



Trading the Burden of Performance
for the Freedom of God's Presence

DISCUSSION
GUIDE



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part I: Platforms vs. Pillars

CHAPTER 1 — THE PLATFORM MENTALITY (PP. 19–26)

Our approach to life has been reshaped by a “platform mentality”—a way of thinking about and approaching the world through platforming ourselves, focusing on our desires, wants, and visibility.

We’re told we’re special and unique from our earliest school days. The millions of advertising messages we are exposed to throughout our lives reinforce this idea, each promising to pander to our desires and wants. Contemporary institutions bend over backwards with promises that they can respond to our needs.

We’ve transitioned from a society emphasizing communal well-being to one where we’re told we each deserve to sit atop our platforms. A platform is a device that ensures we will be seen and thus validated. The platform mentality is based on the concept that the highest good is for our inner self to be platformed and for our needs, wants, and desires to be met.

Individualism, the great ideology of the West (and increasingly the world), has morphed over the last few years. The platform self, as it is emerging, is more herd-like and obsessed with what others think—lacking in autonomy.

The platform mentality drives an ever-intensifying individualism, which platforms our needs, desires, and wants. It captures a vision of human flourishing in which our desires are met, and we receive validation by being affirmed and seen by others.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

PLATFORM IS A MENTALITY, A WAY OF APPROACHING LIFE, THAT PROMISES TO REINFORCE OUR UNIQUENESS, DELIVER ON OUR DESIRES, AND OFFER VALIDATION AND VISIBILITY.

In the opening paragraphs of *Platforms to Pillars*, Mark tells the story of a woman on a plane who expressed her frustration at the plane’s non-functioning entertainment system by telling the crew that “it was their duty to ensure passengers’ positive emotions and mental peace.” What does the woman’s definition of the crew’s duties reveal about her mindset?



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Mark offers a definition of a “platform mentality” on page 21. Would you change, remove, or add anything to this definition?

THE PLATFORM PAIN POINT IS FELT WHEN DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS WITHIN OUR PLATFORM SOCIETY FAIL TO DELIVER OUR WANTS, DESIRES, AND NEEDS IN THE FACE OF REAL-WORLD CHALLENGES. SUCH MOMENTS REVEAL HOW OUR PLATFORM SOCIETY HAS INFLATED OUR EXPECTATIONS.

When you interact on social media (posting, commenting, reacting, etc.), how do you feel if you receive positive responses to your post(s)? How do you feel if you receive no response or negative backlash?

THE PLATFORM MENTALITY CREATES A NEW KIND OF SELF THAT LACKS INDEPENDENCE AND IS MORE PRONE TO INFLUENCE AND GROUPTHINK.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being an active self-thinker and 10 being a constant group-thinker, where do you see yourself? Would you have rated yourself differently 5 or 10 years ago? If so, what do you think has changed?

Think back to the opening story in this chapter. Have you ever behaved with or exhibited a “platform mentality” like the woman on the plane? What happened?



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CHAPTER 2 — PILLARS (PP. 21–38)

Across cultures, the role of an elder is often interchangeable with the word “pillar.” Someone who has been an elder in their community or town is frequently celebrated as “a pillar of the community.” Although pillars are often older people, a young person can still be a pillar, growing into the role more fully as they age.

In contrast, the kind of contemporary global culture, spread by the internet and popular entertainment, prefers novelty to wisdom, individualism to building community, and irreverence to respect. The platform mentality rejects submission to a hierarchy in which one must limit one’s freedom by yielding to a process more significant than oneself to receive wisdom and knowledge.

Through their resilience, courage, and fortitude, pillars bear loads for others by taking responsibility and offering support and encouragement. They work with other pillars to pass down the generations’ vital knowledge and wisdom through instruction and the example of their lives. Living this way, pillars create space for others to succeed and flourish. They do this through service, sacrifice, self-denial, and living for the greater good.

Pillars delight in creating space for and seeing others step into their calling in Christ. In the kingdom of God, pillars live to create a supportive space for others to thrive. Their actions contribute to the strength and spiritual health of the collective people of God. Often cloaked in ordinary garb, pillars live in an extraordinary way.

Pillars, in the biblical sense, are not naturally occurring phenomena. They emerge because of God working in their lives. The Lord asked Moses to find those who feared God, who were devoted to Him with all their lives. The attributes that God lists for pillars have been modelled by Moses. Therefore, pillars emerge as God works in individuals’ lives, and the crucial way that God does this is by encouraging us to model living as pillars.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

CONTEMPORARY CULTURE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGES A LIFESTYLE AND WORLDVIEW THAT UNDERMINE THE ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS NECESSARY FOR CULTURAL ELDRERSHIP.

Both platform and pillar are architectural terms. Think of a pillared building such as the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, the Parthenon in Athens, or even the Colosseum in Rome. What purposes do the columns of these buildings serve? List at least three.



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Name someone whom you would consider an elder or pillar in your local community or church, in your state or nation, or perhaps even in your personal life. Which one of their “pillar” characteristics would you like to emulate and why?

ELDERS AND ELDERSHIP ARE VITAL PARTS OF A HEALTHY SOCIETY. THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE HEALTH OF A SOCIETY THROUGH THEIR EXAMPLE, SUPPORT, AND THE PASSING ON OF WISDOM.

One of John Wesley’s biographers wrote of him, “The closer people got to him, the more they tended to respect the integrity of his faith.” If people who are genuinely close to you were asked what they respected most about you, what do you think they would say?

PILLARS CAN BE LEADERS OR FOLLOWERS. IT IS PRIMARILY A POSTURE RATHER THAN A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP.

It’s easy to understand how a leader could be described as a pillar. How could a “follower” be a pillar?

Having read chapter 2, how would you explain the difference between a platform mentality and a pillar mentality?

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Part II: Platforms

CHAPTER 3 — DAIS: THE PLATFORM OF ELEVATION (PP. 41-52)

A *dais* is a platform that symbolizes the elevation of a monarch above their people, an ancient representation of power. Platforms attempt to change how we view someone or something by symbolic elevation. Ultimately, this is done to make us see the person who has been elevated differently.

In our current era of radical individualism, we have constructed a sort of psychological dais—a mental framework known as platform. This mindset influences how we perceive the world around us.

Platforms are drained of exclusivity when they are everywhere, losing their social and symbolic weight. Platforms promise to elevate us, yet they hide us in the crowd. They promise us a voice yet drown us out in a cacophony of chaotic voices with whom we must compete for attention.

The platform mentality implies that we deserve the same individual attention, material privilege, opportunities, freedom, and desire fulfillment that historical monarchs enjoyed. Digital platforms offer us a mass distribution of the royal lifestyle. However, this contradicts many firmly held contemporary values of equality. We expect fairness, but the platform frame creates constant social comparison and competition.

Contemporary culture encourages us to live with a platform frame, yet we do so with little real power. The precarious nature of platforms, whether dais or digital in form, reveals an important truth: Power is fleeting. Symbolic power even more so.

The platform society offers us godlike elevation and visibility, yet our lived reality is human weakness. The more we attempt to build a platform, the more powerless we can find ourselves in a chaotic and changing world. Platforms offer us greater visibility but also make us more vulnerable.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

PLATFORM IS A WAY OF CREATING IMPORTANCE AND VALUE THROUGH THE SYMBOLISM OF ELEVATION. ELEVATION CREATES A SENSE OF AUTHORITY AND EXCLUSIVITY.

Have you ever been in close proximity to royalty . . . a king, queen, prince, member of a royal family, etc.? (Or have you ever watched a royal ceremony on television or online?) What protocols and practices clearly set them apart from you and from others?



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Review the protocols and practices you listed in the previous question. If those had been missing from the ceremony, would the monarch's power have been diminished? What would have been diminished?

IN CHAOTIC AND CRISIS-FILLED TIMES, THE SYMBOLISM OF PLATFORM BECOMES A MEANS OF EXERTING POWER.

If you have ever been part of a performance, play, or presentation that placed you on a stage or platform above your audience, what emotions did you experience while you were on the stage/platform? Did being on the stage/platform "heighten" any of those emotions?

THE PLATFORM SELF CARRIES A PRICE. DISTORTING REALITY, IT LEADS US INTO DECEPTION, WARPING OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD.

In this chapter, Mark states that "Platform carries a price." Do you agree? Explain your answer.

Have you ever witnessed someone being "canceled" on social media because of their view, beliefs, or practices? What happened? Have you ever been "canceled"?

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CHAPTER 4 — STAGE: THE PLATFORM OF PERFORMANCE (PP. 53–62)

The ancient Greeks did not simply invent the raised platform we know as the stage; the whole of ancient Greek society was a stage; thus, naturally, democratic politics reflected this constant sense of performance we know as theatre. Acting and authenticity blurred together. Those who could act and platform themselves as the most impressive individuals held the most significance in such an environment.

For many, social media has blurred the line between stage and real life, performance and audience. Technology, for many, acts as a kind of filter for reality. Real life becomes fodder for content. The platform framing has added a performative tone to our social interactions.

Just as Greek actors wore masks on stage, digital platforms offer us virtual masks to present an idealized self online to the world. The feedback loop of likes and positive comments reinforces these digitally idealized self presentations, leading us to seek constant affirmation. In a feedback loop, we perform for others while they perform for us. This shapes how we engage with the world while hiding our authentic selves. This pressure can stifle authentic self-expression, making it hard to reveal our true selves.

Performative behaviors become attached to a shame cycle, in which we fear that we don't match up to the idealized presentations we broadcast to the world. Such factors inhibit our ability to have genuine encounters with others. Our capacity to foster rewarding relationships is undermined. So is our ability to enjoy life and experience pleasure. The performative culture cannot imagine a gratifying moment without sharing or broadcasting.

In the past, institutions were seen as a context in which the individual could serve the greater good of society. Now institutions are leveraged into platforms from which to perform, broadcast one's content, and expand one's base of followers. The institution no longer forms the individual; the performative individual deforms the institution. We are leaving behind society where service was put above self for the greater good.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

PLATFORMS UNDERMINE AUTHENTICITY, TURNING MUCH OF LIFE INTO A PERFORMANCE.

Platform and performance were pervasive in ancient Greek culture (pp. 53–54). Greek politics was often very theatrical and performance-based. Is performance a part of modern politics? Give an example.



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How are social media and modern technology blurring the lines between reality and performance?

PLATFORMS TURN LIFE INTO A HIGH-PERFORMANCE ENDEAVOR IN WHICH PLEASURE BECOMES LABOR, AND CONSTANT SELF-EVALUATION CREATES PERPETUAL PRESSURE TO PERFORM.

The unrealistic online personas we often create can lead to a nagging fear that we would suffer rejection if others saw our authentic selves (p. 57). Did you ever post content that wasn't an honest representation of your life? What were you trying to achieve and why?

PLATFORMS UNDERMINE FORMATION. INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS ARE RESHAPED AS PLATFORMS FOR PERFORMERS.

Mark points out that many fraternal and civic organizations have seen significant declines in membership over the last decade. Have you ever belonged to a fraternal organization? How do such organizations foster "pillar" mentalities rather than "platforms"?

If you could form your own civic organization, what would its mission be? Why is that focus important to you?

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CHAPTER 5 — MOUNTAIN: THE PLATFORM OF GLORY (PP. 63–74)

Influencers from around the globe, from all cultures and backgrounds, are breaking laws, bones, and even their loved ones' hearts to boost their online profiles. What is the motivation for such risky behavior? Why turn mountains and panoramic sites into platforms? The answer is that the drive to build platforms and to platform ourselves is ultimately religious.

Many ancient cultures saw mountains as holy places. Mountains were seen as symbolic meeting places between humanity and the divine. Human-made high places do not contain the presence of God. Devoid of the of the presence of God, they are built to expand the presence of humans. Babel was less an attempt to access heaven but rather to build a heaven on earth without God.

Such building projects aimed to create a false mountain that would be a ladder to heaven. When we read the words of the builders of the Tower of Babel, who proclaim, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves" (Gen. 11:4), we sense their desire to create a ladder to heaven.

Large digital platforms now arrange and control significant parts of the social and economic lives of the planet. The social pyramid that the platform society creates for us promises a pharaoh-like lifestyle of comfort and convenience, the chance to "make a name for ourselves." Yet, in practice, it condemns us to labor at the bottom of the social pyramid as our attention is hijacked for profit.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

PLATFORMS ARE HUMAN-MADE MOUNTAINS, ATTEMPTS TO CREATE LADDERS TO HEAVEN. THEIR ORIGINS ARE RELIGIOUS—TO CREATE GLORY FOR HUMANS.

Think of a time when your use of some kind of platform (social media, economic, professional, or other) brought you a new level of exposure and attention. Did anything about that experience have a religious feel to it for you? If so, how?

Mark's list on page 65 illuminates a concept that Scripture is the story of four mountains that reveal the presence of God. Does your story have any mountain experiences . . . places where you encountered the presence of God? Explain.



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PLATFORMS ARE A TECHNOLOGY THAT ATTEMPTS TO BOOST HUMANS' ABILITY TO SPREAD THEIR PRESENCE AND EXPAND THEIR POWER.

This chapter describes ancient towers, ziggurats, and pyramids as “false mountains,” symbols of mankind trying to build a heaven on earth without God. How are modern platforms like these false mountains?

A SECULAR SOCIETY ULTIMATELY ATTEMPTS TO ARRANGE ITSELF WITH HUMAN POWER AT ITS CENTER.

Thanks to technology, information that used to take enormous amounts of time to amass and cull can now take a matter of moments, even seconds. What are the benefits of that? What are the dangers?

On page 73, Mark states that through technology “our attention is hijacked for profit.” What does that mean? Do you agree?



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Part III: The Platform Society

CHAPTER 6 — DISRUPTING SOCIETY (PP. 77–90)

During the Arab Spring (2011), digital platforms appeared as a new weapon for those who had long dreamed of freedom in their countries but faced authorities who controlled the military and security services. The control of mass media reinforced this dynamic through television, radio, and newspapers. The arrival of social media and digital platforms changed all of this.

Digital platforms have become some of the most powerful entities on earth today, challenging previous understandings of how society functions and institutions shape our communal and personal lives. Digital platforms don't just increase the prevalence of the platform mentality; they have birthed a platform society. At a profound level, our culture is becoming a platform society, restructured by massive international corporations that operate as digital platforms.

Previous forms of media, such as television channels, newspapers, and movie studios, gained power by making content. In contrast, digital platforms don't primarily make content; they gain power by making the rules by which others can share content. New connections are made, but at the same time, existing social institutions are undermined, and their functions are disrupted.

The Arab Spring protest movement against Hosni Mubarak's authoritarian regime had led to the entrenchment of another authoritarian leader. The "last pharaoh" turned out not to be the last pharaoh. What had changed, however, was the internet. Once viewed as a resource to bring down dictators and oppressive regimes, the internet became a weapon to keep such regimes in power.

Today, there is more at play here than simply emerging new technologies. Ideologies shape technologies. Digital platforms have moved from instruments with a utopian promise to overthrow exploitative powers to themselves becoming powers that exploit us.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

DIGITAL PLATFORMS HAVE EXPANDED THE PLATFORM MENTALITY, CREATING A PLATFORM SOCIETY.

Chapter 6 begins with the story of the emergence of revolution and political dissent during the Arab Spring (2011). How did the initial use of technology contribute positively to the movement's goals? What was the end result?



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How have we moved from being people with platform mentalities to being a platform society? Give a few examples.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS ARE A NEW, POWERFUL ENTITY DISRUPTING AND RESHAPING HUMAN SOCIETY AT EVERY LEVEL.

How does the use of technology disrupt your life? How does it reshape it? Give at least two examples of each.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS ARE POWERFUL TOOLS THAT CAN BRING DOWN REGIMES AND CHALLENGE INJUSTICE, YET THEIR ABILITIES TO BUILD REAL-WORLD ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES ARE LIMITED.

Do you agree with the statement that digital platforms can easily “tear down” but struggle to “rebuild” (p. 86)? Explain your answer.

What characteristics are at the heart of healthy organizations and authentic communities? Can technology replicate those characteristics?



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CHAPTER 7 — CRISIS INDIVIDUALISM (PP. 91–103)

The connected world of the past is giving way to the competitive world of radical individualism. The individual is now the central organizing principle for society. Digital platforms emerged in response to this escalating individualism and the isolation it produces.

The world has moved through two phases of individualism in the last few hundred years (pp. 94-95). The early centuries of the modern world saw an explosion of lodges, benevolent associations, coffee houses, and community organizations, which sprang up across society during the early centuries of the modern era, offsetting the sense of disconnection modernity had birthed, the first wave of individualism.

As a genuine consumer economy grew, the individual was presented with ways to define the self by curating a sense of self through consumerism. The consumer economy formed the individual more than institutions, molding the second individualism.

Digital platforms have spawned a third individualism in their attempts to respond to the contradictions of second individualism. This third individualism is less characterized by seeking freedom or breaking free from constraints. Rather, the third individualism is crisis individualism. Crisis individualism is driven by declining social capital.

Social capital grows among a group of connected people when they choose to live in ways that are mutually beneficial to each other. This helps us understand the role of pillars and the benefit they bring to a whole community. Pillars generate social capital. Social capital makes communities resilient in the face of crises. Social capital degrades as people in communities live more individualistically in ways that only benefit themselves.

Beneath social media's warm, fuzzy marketing images, a predatory and exploitative economic engine purrs. Our desire for connection is mined for data and sold for profit. The emergence of crisis individualism is more than just a story of social connection; it is also the story of our lives being commodified and exploited for others' gain.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

THE LATTER HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WITNESSED A SIGNIFICANT TRANSFORMATION AS INDIVIDUALISM EMERGED AS A PRIMARY ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE FOR SOCIETY. THIS TRANSITION RESULTED IN THE DETERIORATION OF SOCIAL BONDS, CONTRIBUTING TO HEIGHTENED LEVELS OF ISOLATION AND DISCONNECTION.

In 2001, the US Army introduced a new slogan: An Army of One. Facing criticism that it devalued the team concept, it was later replaced. Who would a slogan like “An Army of One” appeal to? What might be the positive side to that appeal? The negative side?



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How would you define “social bonds”? List three (past or present) social bonds in your life.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS EMERGED AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE ISSUES CAUSED BY THE SECOND INDIVIDUALISM. THEY AIMED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL DISCONNECTION AND PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE SPACES FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING WHILE ALLOWING INDIVIDUALS MAXIMUM PERSONAL FREEDOM.

Over the last several years, have you personally stopped participating in-person with any group, organization, church, etc.? Why did you stop attending in-person? Have you replaced that activity with something “remote” or online?

DIGITAL PLATFORMS EMERGED AS AN ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS GENERATED BY THE SECOND INDIVIDUALISM. HOWEVER, IN PRACTICE, THEY HAVE DIMINISHED SOCIAL CAPITAL AND DEGRADED OUR RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF PERSONAL AND CORPORATE CHALLENGES, LEADING TO A THIRD INDIVIDUALISM—CRISIS INDIVIDUALISM.

How have digital platforms and our current emphasis on individualism degraded our resilience and limited our ability to deal with crises?

Think about the platforms, channels, podcasts, and other outlets that you rely on for news and



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information. Do they all share the same or similar viewpoints? If so, would you consider exploring platforms and channels whose viewpoints and opinions differ from yours?



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CHAPTER 8 — BANCA: THE PLATFORM OF EXCHANGE (PP. 105–119)

Around thirty years ago, banks began to adjust how they operated. Debt became a device by which our desires could move beyond the natural limitations that previously provided a barrier to fantasy-driven modes of living. Previously, debt was frowned upon. However, a new way of thinking emerged. One in which debt would be encouraged.

Put simply, banks discovered that they could access new sources of income by encouraging their customers to accrue more debt while selling off and trading in that debt to investors as a source of capital. Enormous profits were made as speculators could bet against individual debtors' ability to repay their loans. Large corporations stopped being pillars of society and became pursuers of pure profit for a small group of shareholders.

The effects of this financial revolution saw society eschew its values of caution, frugality, saving, and the delay of gratification. In its place rose a new lifestyle of recklessness, indulgence, living beyond one's means, and instant gratification. This turbocharged radical individualism and increased the social value of hedonism—the pursuit of individual pleasure.

At their core, the market revolution and the sexual revolution were two sides of the same coin of hyper-individualism. They were both mythologies that proclaimed you could have it all without limitations or consequences. These factors created a new kind of living in which our identity shifted to being primarily defined by what we consume and desire. We could have what we wanted without striving or working.

The effects of this embrace of debt and the fantasies it fueled reshaped our world and sense of self and laid the groundwork for the platform society. If everything is a market, everything is up for sale—even our emotions, attention, and devotion. We are made to feel like we can live like a pharaoh atop the social pyramid, our desires fulfilled, and our fantasies satiated; however, in reality, we live exploited at the bottom.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

A REVOLUTION IN OUR FINANCIAL SYSTEM HAS RESHAPED SOCIETAL VALUES, ENCOURAGING INDIVIDUALS TO EMBRACE DEBT-DRIVEN CONSUMPTION AND DRIVING A CULTURE OF INSTANT GRATIFICATION AND INDIVIDUALISM.

Has there ever been a time in your adult life when you did not have any debt? With 1 being the highest precedence and 5 being the lowest, where would you rank getting out of debt as a personal or family priority?



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The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the “American dream” as “the ideal that every citizen of the United States should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative.” Regardless of where you’re from, if those words previously defined your country’s “dream,” how do you think it would be defined now?

AS THE MARKET AND PROFIT BECAME CENTRAL TO SOCIETY, TREMENDOUS PRESSURE WAS PLACED ON MEDIATING INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY THE FAMILY.

Were your parents spenders or savers—or somewhere in between? How have their financial choices impacted your own spending/saving habits as an adult?

PARTS OF LIFE THAT WERE ONCE BEYOND THE REACH OF MARKET FORCES ARE NOW COMMODITIES TO BE MINED, BOUGHT, AND SOLD.

Review the last few pages of chapter 8. Which ‘parts of life’ is Mark referring to?



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How do you feel knowing that so much of your data and so many of your habits and preferences are not only being tracked, they're being sold for profit? Does that thought make you want to change any of your device use habits? What would you change?



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CHAPTER 9 — ALTAR: THE PLATFORM OF SACRIFICE (PP. 121–132)

After the flight from mediating institutions, and in the wake of the isolation this causes, many digital platforms operate as medicating institutions. Digital platforms offer solace, a disconnection from every day difficulty and same-day delivery of narcotic distraction doses of pleasure. In other words, the platform society wounds us, then provides us pain relief in the place of genuine medical care. What was meant to enable us to enjoy the freedoms of individualism instead entraps us.

Whereas the exploitive regimes of the past restricted and punished, the platform society does not force us into exploitation. Instead, we are lured into patterns of life that diminish us. We are beckoned to a mode of living in which we are willing to sacrifice our time and attention to boost the profits of large digital platforms and the multinational companies behind them. This new form of exploitation is not coercive but seductive. We are seduced into sacrificing our precious time, attention, and relational capacity for others' profit.

Appealing directly to our emotions by linking products to our feelings, emotional triggers can lead us to make rash and unnecessary purchases. This trend now has spilt beyond the realm of marketing and bled into the whole of life. With emotions so central to our lives today, they have become a resource to be exploited for profit. Our feelings, emotions, and mental health are placed on the altar and handed over as a form of sacrifice for others' profit.

This sacrificial order is exploitative, yet one in which we enter into exploitation voluntarily. Sacrifice occurs, and its effects are felt in a new and almost unseen way. The flight from binding social relationships and community organizations toward continual individual freedom ultimately leaves the individual isolated, given everything they think they want but sacrificing everything they truly need. Will we live as sacrifices upon the altars of our platformed society, or will we step into God's invitation to live as pillars?

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

A NEW POLITICAL ERA BEGAN IN THE 1970S, RESHAPING BOTH SIDES OF POLITICS. THE LEFT PRIORITIZED PERSONAL LIBERATION, WHILE THE RIGHT FOCUSED ON ALLOWING THE MARKET FREE REIN. HOWEVER, BOTH SHARED REMARKABLY SIMILAR GOALS: LIBERATING INDIVIDUALS FROM INSTITUTIONS AND COMMITMENTS THAT RESTRAINED THEM.

Why do you think the right prioritized market free rein, as opposed to the left? Do you think that assumption is accurate?



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How does the platform society “wound” us (p. 124)? What kind of “pain relief” does it provide?

THE CURRENT PROFIT MODEL OF A DIGITAL PLATFORM ENTICES INDIVIDUALS TO SACRIFICE TIME, ATTENTION, AND EMOTIONS FOR PROFIT, SHAPING A SOCIETY WHERE WE ARE SEDUCED RATHER THAN FORCED INTO EXPLOITATION. THIS DYNAMIC, DRIVEN BY EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION AND THE LURE OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, ULTIMATELY LEAVES US ISOLATED AND ENTRAPPED IN AN EXPLOITATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH LARGE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

This chapter, as well as others in the book, uses many references and examples of the bondage that digital platforms hold us in. Find at least three bondage-related words in the key point above. Do you believe you are in bondage to digital platforms? Why or why not?

WITH THE COMPLETE SPIRITUAL PICTURE IN VIEW, THROUGH LIVING OUT OF GOD’S WISDOM, THE CHURCH, AS IT LIVES THE WAY OF CHRIST, PREACHES TO THE RULERS AND AUTHORITIES IN THE HEAVENLY REALM. HOW WE LIVE, THEN, IS A FORM OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE. LIVING SACRIFICIALLY AS A PILLAR PREACHES THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD TO POWERS AND PRINCIPALITIES THAT WISH TO SACRIFICE US.

For pharaohs who claimed to be god-like (or gods themselves), procreation was the “fleshly order” that continued their line of deity. The Exodus plague on the firstborn struck at the heart of that belief. If God sent a “plague” against a priority that has replaced Him in your life, what priority would it be and what might the plague look like?



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What one discipline could you start to live more sacrificially? How would that be a form of spiritual warfare? (What would it come against?)

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Part IV: Deliverance

CHAPTER 10 — EXORCISM (PP. 135–146)

Instead of genuine competition, digital platforms operate as monopolies. Your job is to click, to be continually observed and monitored, to hand over intimate data, and to consume. The individual is no longer free but is primed to act in the interest of digital platforms and multinational corporations. The platform self is then less individualistic and, on the surface, less autonomous and more algorithmically driven. Less a heroic individual and more a herd-like creature, less exploring life with freedom and instead exploited and bound. What are the spiritual implications of these developments?

Ever new sources of addiction must be introduced to maintain the illusion of individuality and to keep us clicking. To keep the dopamine flowing, the horizon of sexual, narcotic, and hedonistic experimentation must continually move forward. All while further entrenching us in addiction but also opening to new lines of spiritual oppression. Those caught in such spiritual oppression need deliverance.

The demonic bondage that the man chained in the graveyard (Mark 5) experienced was linked to the demonic bondage of the society in which he lived. There was an individual component to his affliction and a wider social dynamic. The screaming, violent, aggressive behavior, and self-harm were extreme manifestations of the oppression that marked the demonically held land upon which he lived.

There is a spiritual dimension to the levels of exploitation and resultant captivity many people experience in the platform society. There is a wider spiritual battle to which we are called to fight. The war is ultimately God's, and the New Testament reassures us that the ultimate victory has been won on the cross. Yet we are still engaged in spiritual conflict. Those who live as pillars and faithfully for God will find that walk occurring on spiritually contested ground. There will be a need for prayer, discernment, and wisdom. And there is no doubt that there will be a need for deliverance.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

THE SHAPE OF OUR SOCIETY IS CHANGING. THE RISE OF A NEO-FEUDAL SOCIETY, MARKED BY THE CONSOLIDATION OF POWER AMONG TECH ELITES, RESEMBLES A NEW ARISTOCRACY, UNDERMINING PREVIOUSLY HELD VALUES OF DEMOCRATIC NATIONS.

Use the space below to write a definition of feudalism. (Feel free to use a dictionary or web search.) Based on that definition, how is our current platform society “neo-feudal”?



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DIGITAL PLATFORMS, DESIGNED TO SERVE THE INDIVIDUAL, ARE IRONICALLY ERASING THE INDIVIDUAL, TRANSFORMING THE MODERN SELF INTO A HERD-LIKE ENTITY SHAPED BY ALGORITHMS, BIG DATA, AND ENSNARED BY POWERFUL ADDICTIONS.

Do you ever feel “erased” by the current platform society? In what ways?

Imagine a herd of cattle grazing in a meadow. What positive factors does living in a herd have? What are the negatives of herd life?

FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE, FORMS OF SOCIETAL OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION HAVE SPIRITUAL ROOTS. WHEN THERE IS SPIRITUAL OPPRESSION, DELIVERANCE IS NEEDED.

Read the Mark 5 account of the Gerasene demoniac. How was the herd of swine treated by the local residents? How was the demon-possessed man treated?

List a few symptoms of addiction. (Search if you need to.) Do any of the symptoms you listed describe you or your emotional state when using devices or digital platforms? Which one(s)?

PLATFORMS TO PILLARS

DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHAPTER 11 — THE EXODUS PATTERN (PP. 147–154)

As Moses approached the burning bush, God initiated a new direction in history, telling Moses, “When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain” (Ex. 3:12). This way forward would follow a pattern, the Exodus pattern. The Exodus pattern is the grand arc of salvation, which takes us from entrapment to the freedom of worshiping God fully.

Many are becoming aware that they have been living in a spiritual Airbnb while their hearts long for home. We cannot find a home because the platform society promises to deliver our felt needs but robs us of our actual needs. In Eden, God dwelt among humanity; however, since humans rebelled against God, we have been homeless. The Exodus pattern shows us the way back home.

Let’s break the Exodus pattern down into its rough components:

1. OPPRESSION.

THE PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES TRAPPED IN AN OPPRESSIVE ORDER THAT RESISTS GOD’S WILL.

2. LIBERATION.

DELIVERANCE COMES THROUGH AN ACT OF DIVINE GRACE.

3. REFINING.

THE PEOPLE MUST BE REFINED AND CONSECRATED TO MEET A PURE AND HOLY GOD AT THE MOUNTAIN.

4. WORSHIP.

ISRAEL MEETS GOD AT THIS HOLY MOUNTAIN.

5. CALL.

ISRAEL IS CALLED TO BE A HOLY PEOPLE, A KINGDOM OF ROYAL PRIESTS.

6. IMPRINT THE WORLD.

MOSES AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD WERE CALLED TO IMPRINT THE EARTH WITH HEAVEN’S PATTERN.

Jesus predicted the Jerusalem temple’s demise. After the cross, empty tomb, and Pentecost, those washed clean by Jesus and redeemed by His blood would be the new temple. The people of God would be the new dwelling place of God’s presence. In the period between Pentecost and the return of Christ, God would begin to make His home on the earth amongst His people. The Exodus gives us a pattern to live into this reality.

The Exodus pattern is not lived in a moment. It is not an event but rather a process. It reminds us that our journey out of the worldly platform mentality will also be a lifetime pilgrimage out of captivity and into restoration.



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

Prior to reading *Platforms to Pillars*, had you ever considered the garden of Eden as being located on a mountain? How might a mountain location of the garden have impacted Adam and Eve after their expulsion?

GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE FROM CHAOS, IDOLATRY, AND EXPLOITATION SO THEY CAN WORSHIP HIM UPON HIS HOLY MOUNTAIN. AS THEY ENCOUNTER HIM, THEY ARE CALLED BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL VOCATION: TO BE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, IMPRINTED BY GOD, AND IMPRINTING THE WORLD WITH GOD'S WAYS.

Read 1 Peter 2:9. What four phrases do Peter use to describe the people of God? What “job” does Peter ascribe to believers in this verse? What does Peter say God has done for us?

THE EXODUS PATTERN IS BIBLICAL AND LEADS US HOME TO GOD.

Aside from Moses, name three biblical characters (Old or New Testament) who left an established way of life to follow God's leading. What plan or mission did these people accomplish for God?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE EXODUS PATTERN MOVES THROUGH STAGES OF OPPRESSION, LIBERATION, REFINING, WORSHIP, CALL, AND THE IMPRINTING OF GOD’S HEAVENLY ORDER ON EARTH.

Have you ever gone through a period of oppression? What was it and how were you released from it?

Do you feel you are “imprinting the world with heaven’s pattern”? If so, how? If not, what one thing could you begin to practice to help you leave a heavenly imprint on your world?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHAPTER 12 — THE EXILE PATTERN (PP. 155–167)

Those who follow God, even attempting to do His business, can do so in ways that appear outwardly pious while inwardly pursuing platform. We can build spectacular churches, ministries, movements, and even causes that impress the world, but they can become clouded when they become platforms for our own glory. When we do this, we take a step backward. We reverse the Exodus pattern, moving into spiritual exile.

Exile is the opposite of exodus. Humans lose their place in God’s presence atop His holy mountain and descend into exile, wandering and longing for what they have lost. Humans are either moving toward God’s mountain or away from it. They are either returning to their God-given identity and role or running from it.

The endpoint of the Exodus pattern is the world being imprinted with the pattern of heaven. The exile pattern begins with those who live in God’s presence being imprinted by the pattern of the world. Compromise with the patterns of the world leads us to resist the will and way of God. Often, these compromises happen incrementally, yet their direction is always the same—a journey to false worship.

After the fall and the effects of sin entered the world, we often build for our own glory or the glory of our nation, ideology, or ruler instead of building for God’s glory. Such projects always fall short, exacerbating our sense of homelessness and often imprisoning us rather than providing a dwelling place. Our quest for freedom, when executed under our own power, leads not to freedom but oppression.

Heartbreakingly, we all know the stories of leaders who have not only morally fallen but also exhibited abuses of power—in other words, pharaonic leadership. Such exiles never happen in a moment but occur incrementally, as the service of God is slowly replaced by a hunger for personal glory. How do we, in a time of exile, partner with God to walk the Exodus pattern again? The answer is to live faithfully and obediently.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

On page 160 (excerpted above), Mark contrasts the way that “exodus” and “exile” are connected to a kind of imprint. In your own words, explain that contrast.



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

PROJECTS AIMED AT BUILDING FOR GOD CAN BECOME INTERTWINED WITH EFFORTS TO BUILD OUR OWN PLATFORM.

Have you ever observed or perhaps been part of a project that began as a platform for one thing but ended as a platform for something else? What happened?

THE EXILE PATTERN RUNS OPPOSITE TO THE EXODUS PATTERN. WE MOVE FROM WORSHIPING GOD UPON HIS HOLY MOUNTAIN TO BECOMING ENTRAPPED AND EXPLOITED.

If the Israelites had returned to Egypt instead of continuing their exodus, how might they have been entrapped or exploited?

THE PURSUIT OF CELEBRITY IS ULTIMATELY RELIGIOUS. WHEN BELIEVERS PURSUE CELEBRITY, WORLDLY VALUES GAIN A FOOTHOLD WITHIN THE CHURCH.

In what ways can relationships, churches, and faith itself be harmed because Christians pursued “celebrity”? Suggest at least three.



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

In this chapter, Mark writes, “No matter how great the houses, cities, and civilizations we construct, they will always fall short without God” (p. 161). Was there ever a time in your life when you built something without God? What was the end result?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part V: Pillars

CHAPTER 13 — FAITHFULNESS AND NEW CREATION (PP. 171–180)

The story of Moses’ birth offers insight into how God partners with pillars and provides a lesson on how they operate. A series of women—Moses’ mother and the midwives Shiphrah and Puah—defy Pharaoh, align with God’s plan, and act as pillars in the story God is writing. Their example teaches us crucial ways God uses pillars and their values of faithfulness and obedience, sparking new creation in the most hopeless of situations.

Pillars are real people with names, faces, and skin in the game. To fear God more than the social pressure we experience is the foundation of the kind of faithfulness that God builds in His pillars. Pillars are load-bearing structures, and one weight they must bear is social pressure that comes against the plans of God. In a time of platform, influence does not come from standing atop the highest platform. Influence comes from standing faithfully with God.

In moments of cultural pressure, pillars must navigate to find the way of faith through treacherous waters. Effective navigation requires an eye on the horizon, searching for potentials and possibilities of safe passage. Through obedience and faithfulness, pillars act as midwives as God births new creation. Pillars are not only present at the moment of new creation; their devotion enables future generations to flourish, and their faithfulness is an investment in God’s future.

Pillars sacrifice and trust that God will use the small, fragile, and insignificant to advance His purposes. Podiums and platforms promise us the crowd’s attention; pillars partner with God in the quiet places as new creation is birthed. Pillars are early adopters because they see with kingdom eyes that vast trees can grow from mustard seeds.

A platform is a place to stand and influence the world. Pillars are called to stand in and be part of God’s plan as He moves the world toward His purposes. It’s these acts and habits of faithfulness upon which God builds. Small acts, postures, moments of bravery and defiance, saying yes to God and no to the system of the world, flow from their faithfulness, birthing a new creation.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

Picture yourself in the room with Pharaoh when he instructed Shiphrah and Puah to take the lives of Hebrew children. If you had been one of those midwives, what emotions would you have been feeling?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

What would your first prayer to God have been?

THE FAITHFULNESS OF PILLARS UNDER PRESSURE ENABLES NEW CREATION TO BE BIRTHED IN SEEMINGLY HOPELESS SITUATIONS.

How would you describe your actions when you're under pressure? Write down two or three ways you typically respond when stressed.

What one positive change can you make the next time you feel pressured?

MANY PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF SOMETHING OR SOMEONE WHO IS VISIBLY SUCCESSFUL AND IMPRESSIVE. PILLARS PROVIDE SUPPORT WHILE NEW CREATION IS FRAGILE, UNPOPULAR, AND NEW.

Have you ever been attracted to or swayed by someone famous or powerful, only to discover viewpoints and beliefs they held that were contrary to yours and—more importantly—to the Word of God? Who was the person and what contrary belief did they hold?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Is there someone in your life right now who needs a “pillar” to support them? What could you do to help?

THE FAITHFULNESS OF PILLARS PRODUCES GOOD FRUIT IN THE WORLD.

Read Galatians 5:22–23, a familiar passage that gives examples of the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of believers. Which one fruit do you most want to cultivate in your life?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHAPTER 14 — PARADOSIS (PP. 181–192)

Paradosis means “the passing on of something.” The Greeks associated this term with the passing on of something down the generations. We can discover a line of *paradosis*, of passing down instruction in the ways of God, from the commission given to Adam and Eve in the garden, to the mountaintop when God instructed Moses, and all the way to the writings of the early church in the New Testament.

Pillars pass on essential knowledge to others through space and time. However, the loss of *paradosis* prevents the passing down of essential knowledge and undermines the strengths of nations, cultures, and civilizations. This is occurring within our society; we suffer from a lack of *paradosis*.

During the twentieth century, the means of transmitting essential knowledge, such as traditions, social institutions, authority, parenting, and apprenticing, were recast as impediments to individual self-expression. Thus, to discover our own creative genius within, such things should be cast off in a great project of self-liberation. Radical individualism undermined the transmission of essential knowledge. The platform mentality delivers a fatal blow to this process.

Throughout history, God’s plan has included His people passing down knowledge and understanding of Him from one generation to the next. However, there are times when this transmission breaks down. One way to view secularism is as a failure of *paradosis*, where people do not pass down the knowledge of God to the next generation.

God’s plan, as revealed in Genesis, involves generations teaching God’s ways, ultimately filling the world with His glory through His people’s presence. Before sin entered the world, God’s vehicle for transporting the essential knowledge of His glory was biological. Pillars would birth pillars, and so on, who would, like God, turn chaos into order until the whole world reflected the way of heaven.

The ways of God were to be lived by a remnant, that is, a minority who follows God and passes on His ways. They were to live marked by His glory among human orders that resist the ways of God and, at times, actively work against the passing on of God’s way. Forgetting is a tragedy in the Bible.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

Think of a biblical story in which “forgetting” led to tragedy. What was forgotten, and what was the tragedy?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

PARADOSIS, THE PASSING DOWN OF ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE ACROSS GENERATIONS, IS CRITICAL FOR PRESERVING CULTURE AND STRENGTHENING SOCIETIES, BOTH WITHIN THE CHURCH AND IN BROADER CULTURAL CONTEXTS.

What period in history do you wish you knew more about? Why?

PILLARS PASS THE PATTERNS OF HEAVEN DOWN THE GENERATIONS.

Explain what is meant by the “patterns of heaven.” Give one or two examples.

THE PASSING DOWN OF HEAVENLY PATTERNS HAPPENS RELATIONALLY—LIFE ON LIFE.

In this chapter, Mark shares the story of Harvey, who made an impact on his family that continues today. Do you or your family have a “Harvey” in your faith story? Explain.

What one biblical truth or “heavenly pattern” do you hope to pass down to your family and friends?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHAPTER 15 — THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD (PP. 193–204)

The journey of Exodus does not lead directly from Egypt to the promised land. From an earthly perspective, the Hebrews could have simply travelled around the mountain and moved onto the land flowing with milk and honey. Those who have lived in the shadow of the pyramids will now learn to live with God and follow His ways faithfully. The way of heaven must replace the way of Egypt. For this to happen, the people must be reshaped and remade in His image. They must be patterned after heaven.

On the mountain (Sinai), Moses was shown the pattern of heaven. His task was to enact this pattern among the people of God. Through obeying God and this pattern, he would partner with God as heaven was brought to earth. Heaven, therefore, serves as a blueprint for what the earth could be like when transformed by God’s will. Heaven is where God’s will happens in fullness. When God’s will is enacted, the kingdom of God breaks out and imprints the earth with the pattern of heaven.

The Spirit manifests the pattern of heaven in the world, and we act as mediators of that pattern as God’s workers in creation. In this role, we function as ladders between heaven and earth. Like pillars firmly rooted in the earth and reaching the heavens, we serve as connective structures. When we live faithfully and obediently as these pillars, we bring the pattern of heaven to earth.

For us, shaped by the platform society, the desire to create our platforms and build our personal kingdoms must be cast away. This is a letting go of the patterns of self-platforming, which undermine our call to be pillars. Instead, we must offer our lives to be remade by God, shaped into pillars for His holy purposes. When we wholeheartedly pursue His presence, with no other agenda than becoming intimate with Jesus, we are remade as pillars in His living temple.

A thread runs from Moses’ mountaintop encounter to the Great Commission atop the peak in Galilee, the call to live as a pillar, passing on the heavenly patterns down through time. Doubts over our ability to do this may come. Our ability to live as pillars opens up as we recognize our own weaknesses and our need for God’s power. Once we realize this truth, we become malleable in the hands of the heavenly potter, ready to be shaped into a pillar.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

This chapter opens with Mark’s comment that the Hebrews had been living in the “shadow of the pyramids,” constant reminders that their lives were being ruled over. Have you ever lived in the shadow of a “pyramid” that ruled over your life? What was it, and how did it rule over you?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

HEAVEN OFFERS A BLUEPRINT OF WHAT EARTH, TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WILL, LOOKS LIKE.

If a blueprint is a design plan, what do you think the blueprint of heaven is? (What was heaven designed to do?)

DELIVERANCE IS ABOUT MORE THAN BEING FREED FROM EXPLOITATION. IT’S ABOUT BEING SET FREE TO WORSHIP GOD WITH ALL OUR LIVES AND TO BE MARKED BY THE IMPRINT OF HEAVEN, PATTERNING THE WORLD IN GOD’S WAYS.

On page 199, Mark states “Obedience means integration” and explains what he means by that. Write that explanation here:

List one way that you can worship God today by living out the imprint that heaven has made on your life.

OFTEN PEOPLE LEARN TO LIVE AS PILLARS AFTER THEY HAVE FAILED AT LIVING FOR PLATFORM.

Chapter 15 closes with an illustration of two mountains pathways—one where we are self-focused, the other where we are God-focused—with a valley in between where we are wounded and disillusioned. Using that blueprint as a map, where would you place yourself on your faith journey and why?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHAPTER 16 — THE END OF SECULARISM (PP. 205-215)

There is a growing sense and accompanying evidence that the contradictions at the heart of the platform society may be creating a backlash that could lead back to faith. The enthusiasm surrounding the rise of social media during the late 2000s and 2010s now appears to be subsiding as the downsides of digital platforms become increasingly apparent.

Former members of the New Atheist movement, which sought to undermine belief in God and the influence of religion in society, have begun to soften their positions—reconsidering the importance of Christian values, recognizing that many of the laudable elements of our culture, such as justice and equality, flowed from deeper Christian wells. Such a period of change is opening new possibilities. In such a reordered landscape, we can see early signs that the secular ice may be beginning to thaw.

If, indeed, in the wake of platform society's failings, there is a thawing of secularism and an increasing eagerness to explore faith, the robust community fostered by the church will be a crucial aspect of Christian witness. However, the platform self and society's looming influence pose a significant threat to realizing this potential.

Rather than offering the Christian community as an alternative to the increasing loneliness and meaninglessness of contemporary life, Christians mirror its patterns, fleeing from the essential components of healthy community building: commitment, stickability, resilience, and reliability. Regular connection with the Christian community becomes fleeting, an imposition upon personal freedom. We seek community and convenience without covenant.

The Great Awakening was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power, accompanied by a flowering of pillar-like living among thousands of ordinary believers worldwide. This movement, supported by pillars, rebuilt the social fabric, creating places of meaning, Christian fellowship, and belonging, refashioning the social space and changing nations. We need such a move again.

This is why the call to be pillars could not be more relevant. Pillars are ultimately humans returned to their creational mandate. They enact God's will in time. Pillars live sacredly. Making relationships sacred, work sacred, and time sacred. This is the way forward as the church in the platform society.

KEY IDEAS AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

THE FAILURES OF THE PLATFORM SOCIETY ARE CAUSING MANY TO QUESTION AND A GROWING NUMBER TO EXPLORE FAITH.



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Do you know (or have you heard of) anyone who is questioning the current platform culture and is exploring faith—perhaps for the first time? If so, give an example.

THE SECOND SECULARISM IS WHEN LIFE IS TURNED INTO COMMODITIES TO BUY AND SELL. PARTS OF LIFE THAT WERE ONCE BEYOND THE REACH OF MARKET FORCES LOSE THEIR SACREDNESS AS A PRICE TAG IS PLACED ON EVERYTHING.

Are there any “spaces” in your life that you consider sacred . . . places where you always sense the presence of God? Where is/are the space(s), and what makes it/them feel sacred to you?

GIVEN THE FAILINGS OF THE PLATFORM SOCIETY, THE CHURCH HAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO REBUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL AND PROVIDE COMMUNITY. PILLARS WILL PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THIS RENEWAL.

In this chapter, Mark quotes G. K. Chesterton who said that “God sends saints who are antidotes to the ailments of the age into which they are born.” Name one ailment of the age in which you were born. How can you be an antidote to it?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Review the list of chapters in *Platforms to Pillars*. Which chapter(s) made you say, “I never thought of that before”? Were there any chapters or concepts that you strongly disagreed with? If so, what were they?

Which one or two chapters would you be most likely to share with someone? Why?



PLATFORMS TO PILLARS **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Have you created a platform for yourself that has negatively impacted your relationships, your behaviors, or even your faith journey? What one step can you take today to begin a positive change?

Think back to the positive attributes of pillars that Mark discussed in this book, particularly in chapter 2. What one pillar-like attribute would you most want people to remember you for?



MARK SAYERS is the lead pastor of Red Church. Passionate about spiritual renewal and the intersection of faith and culture, he is the author of numerous books, including *A Non-Anxious Presence* and *Reappearing Church*. He also hosts the *Rebuilders* podcast. Mark lives in Melbourne, Australia, with his wife, Trudi, their daughter, Grace, and twin boys, Hudson and Billy.

Our culture rewards visibility, performance, and self-promotion. But is that the way we were meant to live?

This chapter-by-chapter discussion guide to *Platforms to Pillars* helps individuals and groups engage and understand Mark Sayers' insights and key ideas. Move beyond the fleeting validation of a platform society, and step into the enduring role of a pillar—one who stands firm in faith and helps build God's kingdom.

